

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 181 096

UD 019 869

AUTHOR Ramos, Teresita V.
TITLE Bilingual Education and Public Policy in Hawaii:
Linguistic Considerations.
PUB DATE Apr 79
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the National Association for
Asian American and Pacific Education Conference (San
Francisco, CA, April 25-27, 1979)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Asian Americans; *Bilingual Education; Bilingual
Students; *Comparative Analysis; *English (Second
Language); Filipino Americans; *Language Planning;
*Language Research; Multicultural Education
IDENTIFIERS *Hawaii

ABSTRACT

The author reports on a study of the acquisition of English as a second language by Filipino immigrant children in Hawaii, and recommends a comparative study of this kind across four or more Asian linguistic backgrounds and a comparison of the Hawaiian data with data from children of Hispanic backgrounds on the Mainland. The report concludes that the potential contribution of linguists is of profound importance to bilingual-bicultural education programs.
(WP)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED181096

OCT 15 1979



**BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND PUBLIC POLICY IN HAWAII:
LINGUISTIC CONSIDERATIONS**

**Teresita V. Ramos
Department of Indo-Pacific Languages
University of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Teresita V. Ramos

Univ. of Hawaii

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

WDD 19869

This paper was presented at the April 1979 National Association of Asian American and Pacific Education Conference which was in part supported by funds from the National Institute of Education. However, the views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the policy or position of either NIE or NAAAPE; and endorsement of the paper by either organization should not be inferred.

**Bilingual Education and Public Policy in Hawaii:
Linguistic Considerations**

**Teresita V. Ramos
Department of Indo-Pacific Languages
University of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii**

Hawaii, a multi-cultural, multi-lingual community, is developing a bilingual program that uses the non-English language as a support language rather than as a tool for instruction. It is possible that the number of ethnic languages involved (Ilokano, Samoan, Korean, Cantonese and Japanese), expediency, and institutional and community attitudes influence this direction. This tendency may be true for most Asian bilingual programs. Often neglected is the input of language experts in the planning and analysis of these programs. Important contributions of general linguistic theory, research and pedagogy are glossed over in the actual policy of planning teacher training programs, running bilingual programs and assessing the effects of bilingual instruction.

This presentation will attempt to outline some of the potential contributions of linguistics to the cause of bilingual-bicultural education.

It should first be acknowledged, however, that social, political, psychological, economic and other factors must surely outweigh the purely linguistic factors in any analysis of bilingual education efforts and in any actual policy planning for bilingual education. Nevertheless, questions of language structure, language use and language acquisition are at the core of the bilingualism issue; and the findings, methods and insights of linguistics will and should have some core relevance in any discussion of bilingual education.

The Contribution of Linguistics to Bilingual-Bicultural Education

In the past decade, linguists have turned their attention to such areas as language development in children, social influences on language use, language in social interaction, and cross-cultural differences in communication patterns and values. All of these are areas which impact directly on bilingual education and in which input from linguistics could have a profound effect on the quality of bilingual education programs. Educators could make use of the growing body of knowledge from linguistics in the areas of curriculum development, materials preparation, teacher training, and testing and evaluation.

The contributions of general linguistic theory and research relevant to bilingual education are threefold: (a) the linguist's approach to the study of language, (b) the functional dimension of language use and (c) linguistic theories of language acquisition.

a. *The Linguist's Approach to the Study of Language*

The implicit assumption of all linguists in carrying on their professional work is that "language is patterned human behavior, subject to systematic, objective analysis (Ferguson, 1966)."

Linguists can provide the techniques of analysis and the research needed to enable schools to do more accurate assessment and placement of students and can lay the basis for attitudinal changes among teachers and others which alone could spell the difference between educational success or failure for students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

b. *The Functional Dimension of Language Use*

Socio-linguistic research in recent years has highlighted the importance of recognizing the functional dimension of language use in bilingualism and language development (Troike, 1977). Language is learned and used for particular social purposes and different domains, as well as in different types of social settings. Linguists today strongly emphasize that language is deeply interwoven with culture, social interaction, and the very process of learning and should not be taught and studied in isolation as an end in itself. The goal of instruction should therefore, not be merely language, or linguistic competence, but communicative competence – the total ability to use a language in the widest range of communicative contexts, including all of the traditional skills of spoken as well as written language.

Given communicative competence in two languages as one of the goals of a bilingual-bicultural program, linguistics can contribute a great deal to curriculum development and materials preparation. Particularly in the less commonly taught languages, Asian and Pacific linguists are the only persons available with the knowledge and expertise needed by educators for constructing curriculum materials. The participation of linguists in the materials development effort should be required for without adequate curricula and materials, programs will be unable to meet the needs of students and will not be able to long survive.

Linguistic theory, psycholinguistics and language teaching research are converging on a major direction in teaching which rejects much of the so-called audio-lingual approach of the past two decades, particularly the use of traditional ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction at the elementary school level.

An ESL program alone is not adequate for teaching children from a different language background at the elementary level. It would be psychologically damaging and fails to meet students' needs. What should be proposed instead is an integrated approach to English instruction, both communication-oriented and content-based.

c. Linguistic Theories of Language Acquisition

At first the research literature was on mother tongue or first-language acquisition (sometimes with child bilinguals), but more recently it has begun to include the acquisition of second or other languages – both child and adult – inside or outside the classroom.

At the present time there is no dominant linguistic theory of acquisition, but instead there is a growing body of information which is contributing in turn to the development of general linguistic theory. Current work shows four areas in second language research of value to planners of bilingual education programs (Hatch 1977).

(1) Longitudinal, in-depth case studies of individual children either acquiring two languages simultaneously or adding a second language.

These studies might give more specific data about the ease/difficulty of second language learning when formal instruction is not given. They can give additional data about learners who begin learning a new language at different ages and on the order in which various parts of the language are learned.

(2) Experimental cross-sectional studies which have tested many hypotheses about second language learning.

These studies can give more specific information about the learners' proficiency in each language skill to supplement the global picture of overall proficiency. The longitudinal studies and cross-sectional studies together can give additional data about the amount of variation in speed of acquisition and the grammatical accuracy of language produced by second language learners.

(3) Studies of language switching and mixing.

These studies can give information which separates language mixing as a developmental phenomenon (when the child is not yet proficient in the new language) from the skilled use of two languages in a mixed code by fluent bilinguals.

(4) Classroom discourse analysis.

This area can give information about the kinds of programs, the kinds of language modeling, interaction and correction that occur in language instruction classes and in classes where the language is not formally taught but used as a medium for subject matter instruction. It can also give information about discourse styles which may be language or culture specific.

A Study of English Acquisition by Filipino Children in Hawaii

On the subject of language acquisition, I would like to discuss my study on the acquisition of English as a second language by Filipino immigrant children in Hawaii.

Hawaii is an ideal setting for studying the learning of English by children coming from different Asian and Pacific language backgrounds. According to a recent language survey conducted by the Department of Education, there are about thirty languages spoken in Hawaii. The bilingual program focuses on four Asian languages (Ilokano, Korean, Cantonese, Japanese) and one Pacific language (Samoan).

Since there are only a few studies on second language acquisition of Asian immigrant children, I decided to find out the strategies in learning English resorted to by recently arrived Filipino students by studying samples of their oral language.

The subjects were 36 K - 3 Filipino students aged 5-8 years. The tests employed were Dulay and Burt's Bilingual Syntax Measure (1975) and Mace-Matluck's Listening Comprehension and Structure Response Tests (1974). These tests have been used in most cross-sectional studies in English as a second language and thus comparative studies will be made at some future time.

I was interested in the role errors play in revealing the processes resorted to by the child in learning the second language: and so I used the tests more as an elicitation device rather than as a evaluator of language proficiency. I was also interested in examining the order of acquisition of certain English morphemes (e.g. inflections, articles, prepositions, etc.) from the childrens' responses.

The tests were administered twice to obtain cross-sectional as well as some developmental data. The two tests provided us with controlled data, that is, specific responses and discrete items. Samples of free speech or extended discourse would also be useful. Therefore during the second testing phase, the children were asked to retell familiar stories with picture books as cues. The subject would leaf through a book about the Three Bears and tell the story.

From the responses, grammatical errors were extracted and classified into various categories such as (1) developmental-errors similar to first language acquisition errors; (2) interference-errors due to the influence of the native language of the subject; (3) ambiguous-errors that are similar to both (1) and (2); and (4) unique-errors that neither (1) or (2). Relative frequencies of the errors were tabulated.

A morpheme is said to be acquired if 90% of the subjects can use it correctly in a least three instances where it occurs obligatorily in each child's responses.

The tentative findings of this study appear to show some similarity of sequence of acquisition with that of first language learners except for the early acquisition of articles (probably due to positive transfer from the native language).

Findings of the study also bore out some of Hatch's (1974) generalizations on universals of second language acquisition and Slobin and Brown's findings from first language data. It was noted that forms of low phonetic saliency (e.g. - 's, 'ed), low semantic content or sematically unimportant forms (e.g. auxiliaries, copula, inflections) and redundant forms, that is, forms whose omission will not result in serious misunderstandings (e.g. copula, auxiliaries, - s plural inflection) are slow in being acquired.

Apparently a communication strategy is being applied by second language learners. The second language is being simplified to eliminate confusing forms in order to communicate without excessive hesitations and get the message across with the least interference. Conversely, the frequent use of semantically important words such as nouns and the base form of the verbs in most responses supports communication as an important goal of second language learners.

The early appearance of the *'ing* verb form is a counterexample to the generalization of the late appearance of forms having low semantic power. It is possible that this form occurs frequently in the input data. It was noted, however, that the appearance of the form is no guarantee of the child's having learned the concept of ongoing action. The subjects used -ing forms in many senses before its meaning or function is narrowed down to the standard progressive usage. Linguistically complex concepts such as agreement and tense occurred very late in the subjects' responses.

As mentioned earlier, most of the errors committed were similar to developmental errors, though some of the distinctions, such as the omission of the plural inflection, the lack of agreement between subject and predicate, and the omission of the copula are not important in Philippine languages and therefore could also be categorized as ambiguous. What is difficult to explain about the preliminary findings is that the comparable Hawaiian subjects, as revealed in previous studies on second language acquisition, acquire most of these morphemes much later.

After the first test, only the article, mostly *the*, was acquired by the subjects. The second test revealed that only one other morpheme, the *'ing* verbal inflection, was acquired. A further examination of the data revealed that certain constructions were neither standard English nor English developmental errors. They were constructions common in Hawaiian creole or pidgin (e.g. *wen* for the past morpheme; *gon* for future; negative construction *no, not, nomore, nevah*; *get* for 'have' and *stay* for copula 'be'). This development strongly supports the communication strategy applied by second language learners. My hypothesis is that the children are learning two dialects of English unconsciously and that the predominant one (Hawaiian creole or pidgin) which is the language of peers in this area, is an important factor in delaying the subjects' acquisition of standard English.

If this were really the case, teachers and curriculum writers need to make the children aware of the fact that they are learning two dialects, each with its own use, and that since both are important they should be able to use the languages in the right domains — Hawaiian creole with their peers and standard English in the classroom.

The main limitation of my study I believe is my lack of input data. I have no solidly validated data that show what causes the acquisition or non-acquisition of the language forms and their functions. It seems to me a detailed discourse analysis of the language of the classroom as well as peer interaction would be most revealing of the processes applied by children in learning a second language.

The above research is very exploratory in nature. There is at present a pressing need for research of this kind on several Asian speaking children in Hawaii. An initial detailed comparative study across four or more Asian linguistic backgrounds and a comparison of the Hawaiian data with the data from children of Hispanic backgrounds on the Mainland would be an important contribution to the literature on second language acquisition. While a number of studies deal with the latter, practically none exists for the former.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that linguistic research can provide an essential basis for developing a more effective approach in both native and second language teaching within a bilingual program. The potential contribution of linguists to the cause of bilingual-bicultural education is of profound importance, and the utilization of linguistic knowledge and research is critical if bilingual programs are to be of the quality needed to achieve their goals. It is therefore imperative that there be a linguist on the staff of bilingual programs to insure linguistic input in all aspects of policy planning, materials development, teacher training and evaluation for after all language is of important consideration in any bilingual program.

References

- Burt, Marina K, Heidi C. Dulay, and Eduardo Hernandez, 1975. *Bilingual Syntax Measure*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
- Ferguson, Charles A. 1977. "Linguistic Theory" in *Bilingual Education: Current Perspectives (Linguistics) Vol. II*. Center for Applied Linguistics. pp. 43-45.
- Hatch, E. 1977. "Second Language Learning" in *Bilingual Education: Current Perspectives (Linguistics) Vol. II*. Center for Applied Linguistics. pp. 60-86.
- Hatch, Evelyn R. 1974. "Second Language Learning - Universals?". *Working Papers on Bilingualism* 3:1-17.
- Matluck, Joseph H. and Betty Mace-Matluck. 1974. Examiner's Handbook. English Edition. *MAT-SEA-CAL Oral Proficiency Tests*. Seattle Public Schools, Center for Applied Linguistics. Field Test Edition.
- Troike, Rudolph, 1977. "The Contribution of Linguistics to Bilingual-Bicultural Education" *NABE Journal* 1:3 pp. 59-64.